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DRAFT PROPOSALS FOR THE CREATION OF AN AFRICAN PLANNERS ASSOCIATION (SOCIETY)

1. Background

Professionals the world over are known to constitute themselves into associations with a view of providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and the dissemination of research findings. They have also been known to use their associations as platforms for exerting pressure one way or the other, on critical issues of social and economic policy. Annual or biennial conferences/seminars of some professional associations also provide opportunities for the recruitment of qualified staff.

An association of African planners is predicated on the need to bring planners of the Africa region together for a continual reassessment of the planning process, which unfortunately seems to have failed, over the last two and a half development decades, to stem the deteriorating standard of living of the average African. In fact, it is debatable whether improvements in economic and social conditions if ever they were attained can be attributed to the planning effort and not simply to fortuitious circumstances. The result is that very little confidence is reposed in planning as a strategy for structural change and African development.

An association of African planners will provide a forum where economic and physical planners would critically reassess the planning process on a continual basis through exchange of ideas and the dissemination of information on new techniques and strategy for plan formulation, implementation and control.

2. Objectives

The association will provide a regional/Pan-African forum for policy analysis and for continuing dialogue on issues which are of general concern at the national, sub-regional and regional levels. In particular it will focus on possible reforms and the introduction of new techniques which would significantly improve the efficacy of the planning process.

3. Activities

In view of these objectives the Society is to engage in the following activities:

- Convene annual meeting for African planners;
- Sponsor seminars and research work on cooperative basis;
- Publish an annual (or semi-annual) journal which would be supervised by an editorial Board chosen mainly from amongst its members.

4. Membership

Membership of the association will be on individual merit and it will be restricted to individuals with the professional background and working/teaching experience in planning. Members will be required to have obtained at least a first degree (or its equivalent) in any of the social sciences -- Economics, geography or related disciplines -- in addition to a working experience of at least five years in comprehensive, urban, regional and sectoral planning. An attestation to this effect will have to be provided.

The association will be guided by a Governing Council comprising its officers and ex-officio members representing the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), IDEP and other reputable inter-governmental and non-inter-governmental organizations which are closely associated with the planning process in Africa at the formulation, implementation or control level. The council shall itself reflect equal representation for each of the five sub-regions. A charter approved by the Governing Council will spell out the details of the rules and regulations of the association.

Officers of the association shall include:

1. President
2. Four Vice-Presidents representing all sub-regions except that of the President
3. Secretary
4. Four Assistant Secretaries representing all sub-regions except that of the Secretary
5. Editor-in-Chief
6. Four Associate Editors representing all sub-regions except that of the Editor-in-Chief
7. Treasurer.

The Governing Council will be required to meet two or three times annually but immediately preceding a biennial conference or seminar/workshop organized by the Association, as a way of reducing administrative cost. The tenure of office is non-renewable and shall not exceed three years. There shall also be an Editorial Board with the Editor-in-Chief as Chairman

and the four associate editors as members. Both the President and the Secretary shall be non-voting ex-officio members of the Editorial Board.

5. Process of Establishment

A reputable African planner will be requested, for a modest honorarium, to prepare a draft charter for the association. The draft charter will then be critically assessed (and modified if need be) by a group of five distinguished African planners representing each of the sub-regions. The first assignment of the Governing Council will be to adopt the draft charter following an open debate by the generality of the membership of the association.

6. The Role of IDEP

Since IDEP is a Pan-African institution for training planners it is suggested the proposed association be housed at IDEP. The institute will provide overhead facilities and assist in mobilizing funds for the professional journal and the annual/biennial meetings, conferences and workshops. For the ease and effectiveness of operation the Editor-in-Chief of the professional journal -- Journal of African Planners -- may be an IDEP Staff member.

IDEP will benefit tremendously from the association since the association will represent an informal constituency. Moreover the research work and publications of the association will be useful inputs for the various teaching, consultancy and research programs of the Institute.

7. Financing

Each member of the association will be expected to pay a reasonable membership fee; annual subscription for the journal is also envisaged. However, the bulk of the financing for the association is expected to be met from the contribution in kind by IDEP -- provision of overhead facilities especially in support of the journal -- grants from donor countries and agencies.

The Governing Council will be required to prepare a biennial budget giving due consideration to the following:

- Annual/biennial conferences
- Annual/biennial meetings
    - Governing Council
    - Editorial Board
- Publication
    - Journal
    - Others
    - Distribution cost
- Overheads
    - Telephone
    - Telex
    - Postage

This list is by no means exhaustive.

The accounts of the association will be audited annually by an auditor provided by the ECA. The auditor's report will be submitted to the annual or biennial meeting of the association for consideration and acceptance.